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REPORT

TO THE

SENATE

ON

TWO WATERSHED PROPOSALS

SUBMITTED BY THE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

FROM THE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

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Introduction

This report seeks to fulfill the obligation of the Committee on Environment and Public Works to inform the Senate and the Executive Branch of initiatives taken by the Committee. Since 1978, the Committee has published periodic reports that explain in detail Committee actions on those projects that are authorized solely by Committee resolution.

This report describes two such projects that were approved by the Committee on September 26, 1984: Turkey Creek Watershed, Oklahoma and Indian Creek-Van Buren Watershed, Iowa and Missouri.

General Statement

The authority for Soil Conservation Service small watershed plans is Public Law 83–522, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, as amended. Under the provisions of that Act, projects either costing over $5 million or those involving structures with a storage capacity of greater than 2,500 acre-feet must be approved by resolution by the appropriate House and Senate Committees.

These watershed protection projects fall into two categories: (1) plans involving a structure of greater than 4,000 acre-feet capacity require a resolution of approval by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; (2) plans involving structures of less than 4,000 acre-feet capacity are reviewed by the congressional agriculture committees.

The Committee on Environment and Public Works finds each of the projects described in this report to be meritorious and worthy of authorization. The Committee's approval of these projects reflects its recognition of the substantial local support and planning effort behind each of these projects. The Committee also notes that the history of each of these projects provides an excellent example of the local, State, and Federal cooperation intended by Public Law 83–566.

Committee Legislation

Coincidental with the Committee's consideration of these two Small Watersheds projects, there is pending before the Senate S. 1739, the Water Resources Development Act of 1984. This bill contains four provisions addressing certain aspects of the SCS Small Watersheds program that pertain to the responsibilities of the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

The provisions attempt to rectify concerns the Committee has had about the more expensive projects being authorized merely by Committee resolution, the apparent shift away from projects whose

major benefits are agriculture related, potentially underutilized recreational potential at impoundments constructed under the program, and the failure in some cases to adequately consider the impact of project recreational facilities on surrounding recreational development.

Public Law 83–566, as amended, places no effective cap on the Federal cost of individual projects. Some of the projects constructed under this law have become quite large and expensive, leading the Committee to question the wisdom of the more expensive projects being approved by simple Committee resolution. For example, during the 97th Congress, the Committee approved the Little Calument River Watershed in Illinois which had a Federal cost of $37.8 million. This report includes the Elk Creek Watershed project in Kansas whose Federal cost is $12.7 million. A provision in S. 1739 would require those Public Law 83–566 projects with over $10 million in Federal costs be authorized by an Act of Congress.

The Committee believes that the Small Watersheds program was originally conceived to provide primarily rural and agricultural benefits. Several individual projects have shown that the focus of the program has shifted, to some extent, towards more urban benefits than rural and agricultural benefits. S. 1739 contains a provision requiring that at least 20 percent of projects benefits must be directly related to agriculture.

The Committee is concerned that many of the projects constructed under Public Law 83–566 may have impoundments suitable for public recreational use but to date remain undeveloped for that purpose and available only to nearby adjacent landowners. Large numbers of single purpose flood control, irrigation, or grade stabilization dams have been built by SCS with no provisions for public access. S. 1739 contains language which would require the Secretary of Agriculture to study the recreation potential at these impoundments.

A provision requiring that Soil Conservation Service include information in applicable project reports on the effects of proposed recreational development on surrounding recreational facilities is also included in S. 1739. This reflects Committee concern that in some cases the promimity of other recreational opportunities has not been properly considered in calculating recreational benefits for projects.

Descriptions of Watershed Work Plans Approved in This Report

INDIAN CREEK-VAN BUREN WATERSHED, IOWA AND MISSOURI

The 47,200 acre Indian Creek-Van Buren Watershed is located in Van Buren County, Iowa and in Clark, Missouri. The project's primary benefits are flood presention, municipal and industrial water supply, agricultural water supply, and fish and wildlife development. The project's structrual measures consist of four single purpose dams for flood control, two dams with roads on top to reduce flooding and associated transportation problems, and one mult-purpose dam with a total storage capacity of 12,800 acre-feet. The total project cost is $4,609,510 of which 58.6 percent of $2,700,000 is Fed-

eral cost. The benefit cost ratio is 1.14 to 1, using a 7⅞ discount rate.

ANNUAL BENEFITS AND COSTS

	Average annual dollars	
	Benefits	Costs
Flood prevention	$128,800	$102,540
Municipal and industrial water supply	60,620	36,090
Other agricultural water supply	68,090	42,590
Fish and wildlife development	211,140	202,410
Project administration		27,480
Total annual benefits and costs	468,650	411,110

CAPITAL COSTS

	Public Law 83–566 funds		Other funds		Total dollars
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent	
Structural measures:					
Flood prevention	$1,122,560	88.7	$143,490	11.3	$1,266,050
Municipal and industrial		0	440,210	100.0	440,210
Other agricultural water supply	228,230	44.0	290,470	56.0	518,700
Fish and wildlife development	1,023,140	50.3	1,012,630	49.7	2,035,700
Project administration	326,960	93.7	21,820	6.3	348,780
Total	2,700,890	58.6	1,908,620	41.4	4,609,510

TURKEY CREEK WATERSHED, OKLAHOMA

The Turkey Creek Watershed encompasses 244,000 acres in portions of Alfalfa, Garfield, Kingfisher, and Major Counties in Oklahoma. The primary benefit of the planned project is flood control and structural measures consisting of eleven floodwater retarding structures. The total project cost is $4,586,200 of which 75.8 percent, or $3,477,900 is Federal cost. The benefit cost ratio is 1.24 to 1, using a 7⅞ percent discount rate.

ANNUAL BENEFITS AND COSTS

	Average annual dollars	
	Benefits	Costs
Flood prevention	$576,530	$464,130

CAPITAL COSTS

	Public Law 83–566 funds		Other funds		Total dollars
	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent	
Structural Measures: Flood prevention	$2,937,600	72.7	$1,102,800	27.3	$4,040,400
Project administration	540,300	99.0	5,500	1.0	545,800
Total	3,477,900	75.8	1,108,300	24.2	4,586,200

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